

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 04248 241443Z

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 L-02 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06

CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /038 W
----- 074082

R 241340Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 200

INFO CHINFO WASHDC

USASETAF VICENZA

USCINCEUR

OASD (M&RA) WASHDC

OCINFO WASHDC

CDR USAECOM TASA SAAD SACRAMENTO CA

CINCUSNAVEUR

COMFAIRMED

COMSIXTHFLT

COMSUBREFITRAGRU LA MADDALENA

COMSUBGRU EIGHT

NAVSUPPO LA MADDALENA

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 4248

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, IT

SUBJECT: AFRS FOR LA MADDALENA

1. EMBASSY RECOGNIZES SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO MORALE AND WELFARE OF NAVY PERSONNEL AND DEPENDENTS THAT WOULD DERIVE FROM PROPOSED INTRODUCTION SEN RADIO SERVICE AT LA MADDALENA. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, SEVERAL CONSIDERATIONS THAT PRESENTLY MILITATE AGAINST IT.

2. ARMED FORCES RADIO AT ALL U.S. FACILITIES IN ITALY OPERATES WITHOUT A LEGAL BASIS AT THE INDULGENCE OF THE GOI. IN OUR VIEW, THE THRESHOLD OF OFFICIAL ITALIAN TOLERANCE WOULD LIKELY BE PASSED IF BROADCASTS WERE TO BECOME A POLITICAL ISSUE AS THE RESULT OF A CAMPAIGN BY THE LEFTIST PRESS. IN THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES, ALL AFRS BROADCASTING IN ITALY WOULD BE JEOPARDIZED.

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PAGE 02 ROME 04248 241443Z

ALL EVIDENCE INDICATES THE DIFFICULTY WITH LA MADDALENA WITHIN

THE GOI IS VIRTUALLY ENTIRELY POLITICAL, WITH ISSUES SUCH AS RADIOACTIVE POLLUTION SERVING PRIMARILY AS STALKING HORSES FOR BOTH THE LEFT IN ATTACKING THE GOVERNMENT AND FOR THE LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNING PARTY IN SEEKING IMPROVED TREATMENT BY THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT. AT LEAST ON THE LOCAL SCENE OUR PRESENCE AT LA MADDALENA COULD BECOME AN ISSUE IN THE ELECTIONS EXPECTED WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. INCREASING THE VISIBILITY (OR AUDIBILITY) OF WHAT PRESENCE DURING THE PRE-ELECTORAL PERIOD WOULD SIMPLY OFFER A FURTHER PRETEXT FOR ATTACKING IT. AND HOWEVER ANONYMOUS THE INITIAL PROGRAMMING OF A LA MADDALENA BROADCAST WERE, THE FACT OF A CLEAR SIGNAL IN ENGLISH WOULD BE ENOUGH TO ESTABLISH THE GILMORE CONNECTION FOR ANYONE WISHING TO MAKE AN ISSUE OF IT. ALTHOUGH THE SIGNATURE OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE BIA WOULD NOT PROVIDE A LEGAL BASIS FOR BROADCASTING, IT WOULD, IN OUR VIEW, BY FORMALIZING OTHER SUPPORT ACTIVITIES, LOWER THE RISK OF BROADER REPERCUSSIONS THAT COULD RESULT SHOULD THE RADIO SERVICE COME UNDER ATTACK.

3. IN PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES, EMBASSY CANNOT APPROVE INITIATION AFRS/SEN SERVICES AT LA MADDALENA. IT IS HOPED THAT AS OTHER MORE URGENT ASPECTS OF THE USN PRESENCE AT LA MADDALENA, PRIMARILY THE SIGNATURE OF A BIA AMENDMENT, CAN BE RESOLVED, IT WILL BE POSSIBLE TO GIVE FURTHER CONSIDERATION TO PROVIDING AFRS/SEN SERVICES. VOLPE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARMED FORCES, POLICIES, RADIO BROADCASTING
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ROME04248
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750102-0363
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750322/aaaaatih.tel
Line Count: 85
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 JUN 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <14 OCT 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AFRS FOR LA MADDALENA
TAGS: MARR, IT
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006